

Message Text

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TO USIA WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 6601

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USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: SUMMARY REPORT ON "U.S. AT 200"

USIA FOR IEA - DAKS; ICS/DP -FISHCHMAN

SECSTATE FOR CU/EA - SWENSON

TOKYO FOR RPO

1. OUR "U.S. AT 200" SYMPOSIUM, WITH MANY THANKS FOR THE STRONG BACKING AT THE WASHINGTON END, HAS TO BE CONSIDERED A SUCCESS. THE AMERICAN SPEAKERS WERE FIRST-CLASS, AS WERE MANY (BUT CERTAINLY NOT ALL) OF THE 31 LOCAL CO-SPEAKERS, DISCUSSANTS, PANELISTS, AND SESSION CHAIRMEN. REACTION OF THOSE WHO ATTENDED HAS BEEN UNIFORMLY FAVORABLE TO ENTHUSIASTIC. WE HAVE PROBED FOR ADVERSE COMMENT AND FOUND NONE. ONE PARTICIPANT CALLED THE SYMPOSIUM AN "INTELLECTUAL EVENT", ANOTHER SAID HE HAD NOT ENJOYED SO MUCH INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION IN MANY YEARS IN SINGAPORE.

2. DISCUSSION AND COMMENT FROM THE AUDIENCE WAS LIVELY AT ALL BUT ONE SESSION (THE ONE ON TRADE), AND A GOOD-HUMORED GIVE-AND-TAKE ATMOSPHERE PREVAILED THROUGHOUT. THE U.S. CAME IN FOR PLENTY OF CRITICISM, PARTICULARLY ON THE FAMILIAR THEME OF PERMISSIVENESS, BUT WITH SOME RECOGNITION THAT THIS IS ONE OF THE BY-PRODUCTS OF INDIVI-
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DUALITY AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. MANY PARTICIPANTS

EXPRESSED ADMIRATION FOR THE U.S. SYSTEM'S FLEXIBILITY AND STRENGTH OVER 200 YEARS AND FOR THE AMERICAN ABILITY TO BOUNCE BACK FROM THE ADVERSITIES OF VIETNAM, WATERGATE, AND CIVIL RIGHTS STRIFE.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYMPOSIUM WAS WELL SUMMARIZED BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE WHEN HE SAID IN HIS OPENING SPEECH THAT "OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO GET AN OVERVIEW OF AMERICAN LIFE AND CULTURE, OF WHAT MAKES AMERICA TICK, AND HOW THE TICKING IS REVERBERATING AROUND THE WORLD". IN HIS CLOSING SPEECH, AMBASSADOR HOLDRIDGE GAVE A CONCISE STATEMENT OF THE HOPED-FOR RESULTS: "I HOPE THAT THIS SYMPOSIUM HAS DISPELLED SOME OF THE DOUBTS THAT SINGAPOREANS HAVE EXPRESSED OVER OUR COMMITMENTS IN THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AREAS. I TRUST THAT WE ALL WILL EMERGE FROM THIS SYMPOSIUM WITH A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE DYNAMIC BUT ALSO OFTEN DISCONCERTING SOCIAL SCENE IN THE U.S. AND I HOPE THAT WE AMERICANS HAVE CONVEYED TO YOU OUR CONFIDENCE AND FAITH IN OUR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES."

4. THE REMARKS OF THE AMERICAN SPEAKERS AND MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION BY THE AMERICANS AND SINGAPOREANS WERE SMACK ON TARGET FOR THE FIRST FOUR OF OUR USIS AND THE FIRST TWO OF OUR CU OBJECTIVES. ALTHOUGH ALL SPOKE THEIR OWN MINDS, WITH NO PROMPTING WHATEVER FROM US, IT WAS ALMOST AS IF OUR OBJECTIVES HAD BEEN COMMITTED TO MEMORY. BARNETT GAVE SOLID ASSURANCES OF THE U.S. INTENTION TO REMAIN A PACIFIC POWER. EBERLE STRESSED U.S. DEDICATION TO FREER AND EXPANDING WORLD TRADE AND DECRIED CHARGES OF PROTECTIONISM. WATSON WAS ELOQUENT IN DESCRIBING THE FORCES WHICH HAVE SHAPED AMERICA AND IN EXPOUNDING ON THE RESILIENCE AND CREATIVITY THAT DERIVE FROM UNTRAMMELLED FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN U.S. SOCIETY. RAMBACH REFLECTED THE CONCERNS MANY AMERICANS FEEL FOR PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AGAINST ENCROACHING INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOUND TOTALLY UNEXPECTED SUPPORT FROM THE SINGAPOREAN AUDIENCE. SCAMMON GAVE AN AT ONCE ERUDITE AND REFRESHINGLY CANDID APPRAISAL OF THE AMERICAN VOTER'S ROLE IN THE DYNAMIC DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. AND UNCLASSIFIED

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FULLER WAS A ONE-MAN SHOW WHO OVERWHELMED HIS AUDIENCE WITH A GRAND VISTA OF THE PAST AND FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC MAN.

5. OUR ONLY DISAPPOINTMENT WAS THAT THE TURNOUT WAS LESS THAN ANTICIPATED AND HOPED FOR. TWO SESSIONS REACHED OR EXCEED OUR TARGET OF 150. ABOUT 225 ATTENDED THE FIRST MORNING FEATURING BARNETT ON FOREIGN

POLICY, AND 150 HEARD A NON-STOP THREE HOUR AND 20 MINUTE PRESENTATION BY FULLER. BUT ATTENDANCE AT ALL OTHER SESSIONS WAS UNDER 100. THE ONLY BAD SHOWING WAS THE AFTERNOON SESSION ON TRADE FEATURING EBERLE WHICH STARTED OFF WITH 70 BUT TAILED OFF TO 20 AT THE END. QUALITY OF THE AUDIENCE WAS GOOD, MAINLY TEACHING STAFF FROM THE TWO UNIVERSITIES AND MID-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. SOME BIG NAMES INCLUDING SEVEN PERMANENT SECRETARIES ATTENDED THE OPENING. TWO OF THE SINGAPOREAN SPEAKERS -- LAU-TEIK SOON, ACTING HEAD OF THE POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, AND OW CHIN HOCK, LECTURER IN THE ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT, BOTH UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE -- WERE NAMED PAP CANDIDATES FOR PARLIAMENT IN THE FORTH-COMING ELECTION WHILE THE SYMPOSIUM WAS UNDERWAY. BOTH JUST RETURNED FROM IV GRANTS IN THE U.S.

6. THE INDIRECT, INTANGIBLE BENEFITS OF THE SYMPOSIUM ARE, WE THINK, CONSIDERABLE. WE ENJOYED GOOD -- FOR SINGAPORE, EXTREMELY GOOD -- PUBLICITY IN THE ENGLISH AND CHINESE PRESS. ARTICLES APPEARED ON THE PAPERS GIVEN BY BARNETT, EBERLE, WATSON, AND RAMBACH AND ON THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S OPENING AND THE AMBASSADOR'S CLOSING SPEECHES, PLUS FEATURE ARTICLES ON WATSON AND FULLER. CLIPS OF THE OPENING APPEARED ON TV NEWS. THOSE WHO ATTENDED SURELY TALKED ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM WITH FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES. THE EMBASSY'S IMAGE WAS ENHANCED BY SPONSORING SUCH A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY, NON-PROPAGANDISTIC EVENT. AND WE DEEPENED OUR CONTACT WITH MANY USEFUL AND INFLUENTIAL PERSONS AND ESTABLISHED CONTACT WITH MANY NEW ONES.

7. ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE SYMPOSIUM FOR THE AMERICAN SPEAKERS WENT OFF QUITE WELL. BARNETT SPOKE TO THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PRESTIGIOUS PYRAMID CLUB AND THE INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES AND TALKED WITH A NUMBER OF VIPS INCLUDING THE PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER. EBERLE HAD GOOD MEETINGS WITH PEOPLE FROM THE SINGAPORE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE, MONETARY AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD WHO IMPRESSED HIM MUCH MORE FAVORABLY THAN THOSE HE ENCOUNTERED DURING HIS SYMPOSIUM SESSION. WATSON -- WHO WAS GENERALLY CONSIDERED THE STAR OF THE SYMPOSIUM -- WAS KEPT OVERTIME AFTER A TALK AT A PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS WOMEN'S DINNER. FULLER GAVE ANOTHER THREE-HOUR PRESENTATION TO HUSBANDS AND WIVES OF THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL. RAMBACH MET WITH MANY PEOPLE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS. SCAMMON WAS REGRETTABLY UNDER-EMPLOYED, GIVING ONLY ONE TALK TO POLITICAL SCIENCE FACULTY AND

HONORS STUDENTS. TWO LARGE LECTURES PLANNED FOR HIM
HAD TO BE CANCELLED BECAUSE OF HIS TIGHT FLIGHT SCHEDULE.
WE TRIED TO INTEREST RTS IN DOING TV PANEL SHOWS FOR
ANY OR ALL THE AMERICAN SPEAKERS BUT TO NO AVAIL. ALL
SPEAKERS HAD THE USUAL ASSORTMENT OF LUNCHEES AND DINNERS
TO MEET ADDITIONAL SINGAPOREANS, INCLUDING THE POOLSIDE
DINNER BY A RATHER GLUM PRIME MINISTER.

8. WILL SEND FM WITH DETAILS IN DUE COURSE.
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